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ABSTRACT

This report discusses a workshop conducted by the library of San Jose State University to instruct eight students with learning disabilities (SLD) in the use of CD-ROM databases. The workshop contributors believed that CD-ROM databases could simplify research paper and homework assignments for such students. The 5-month workshop sought not only to entice these students into the library to receive tailored library instruction, but also to strengthen the bonds between the library and the campus learning disabilities staff. Because sequencing was a problem for this group, the workshop was broken into constituent parts, which incorporated the steps necessary to formulate, implement, view, and print out search results on the ERIC CD-ROM database from SilverPlatter. The accompanying instructional materials (e.g., handouts and overhead projections) were color-coded; this was particularly helpful to students with certain perceptual disorders for whom reading high contrast print materials (i.e., black and white) would be difficult. The workshop achieved its objectives of establishing better contact with both the target group and the learning disabilities support staff. It is suggested that this workshop could serve as a model for bibliographic instruction to other groups who require simple, systematic entry into the technology. Nine sections of colored handouts are appended, including a CD-ROM evaluation form. (16 references) (SD)

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An Academic Library Workshop for Instructing Students With Learning Disabilities to Use CD-ROM Databases

by Greg Carlson and Donna Z. Pontau
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San Jose, California

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Greg Carlson

Donna Pontau

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The disabled student represents a new and welcome contribution to diversity and pluralism on American college campuses. Legislation passed in the 1970's has helped the disabled to navigate into the mainstream where they are pursuing postsecondary education in increasing numbers. Library professionals sensitive to this user group's demands have developed a foundation in the literature for service adaptation and innovation. Texts exist for libraries to conduct self-evaluations of their services to physically handicapped individuals; parking accessibility, staff orientation and funding for special projects are given detailed treatments.¹ Journal articles have defined the physical, emotional and psychological barriers to library use from the disabled patron's perspective.² Other writers have focused on the erroneous perceptions and widespread anxieties of public service librarians interacting with the disabled.³ One may expect that as these ideas circulate, and as more prescriptive legislation is enacted to protect and encourage advanced learning in disabled minorities, academic libraries will turn knowledge and awareness into concrete measures for enhanced service to this group.

Despite a swelling interest in accommodating students with disabilities, scant mention is made in the library literature of instructional strategies to effectively reach students with learning disabilities (SLD). This paper discusses one academic library's effort to instruct SLD in the use of CD-ROM databases. The workshop, perhaps the first project of its kind, sought not only to entice SLD into the Library to receive tailored bibliographic instruction, but also to strengthen tethers between the Library and the

Disabled Students Services office on campus. Following a brief introduction about SLD exceptional needs and academic library responses to this patron group, the authors will describe the preparations and results of a workshop designed to teach SLD to use CD-ROM databases at San Jose State University Library in San Jose, California.

What is a learning disability?

Perhaps the most familiar form of a learning disability in the public mind is dyslexia, although other forms are widespread. The California State University system has extracted the following definition from the National Joint Committee on Learning Disabilities:

"A learning disability is a generic term that refers to a heterogeneous group of disorders manifested by significant difficulties in the acquisition and use of listening, speaking, reading, writing, reasoning or mathematical abilities. These disorders occur in persons of average to very superior intelligence and are presumed to be due to central nervous system dysfunction. . .⁴

As such, learning disabilities *are not* a form of mental retardation or emotional disorders. Some common characteristics of SLD include slow reading rates, difficulties with written language skills, inability to concentrate on and comprehend oral language, confusion in recalling sequences of operations in math or word problems, problems with time management and cognitive organization.⁵ A particularly relevant result of these difficulties is the inefficient use of library reference materials.

Students with learning disabilities have the same legal entitlements as adults with physical disabilities. The Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Section 504, ". . . prohibits discrimination on the basis of handicap against persons

in programs or activities receiving or benefiting from federal assistance."⁵ Federal law also mandates that "reasonable accommodation" be provided for SLD in the educational setting. Allowing taping of lectures, extra time taking exams or the use of large print are frequent methods for adjusting to SLD deficits. Learning disability advocates are quick to point out that these accommodations are not designed to give SLD any advantage. Rather, they exist to help these students compete on equal terms with their peers. SLD simply have a different way of learning.

While reasonable accommodations have met with resistance in some classrooms, librarians who relish their role as teacher and their professional value of equal access, should manifest no reluctance to change or adapt. "The need for certain accommodations is no excuse for barring potential library users. We must be diligent in assuring access to all to obtain the information they need and want."⁶ And the need demonstrably exists. Ruffner has spelled out the coming competition for limited national resources between minority groups: "The outlook for continued comprehensive, separate programs for disabled people is not promising."⁷ Librarians well know that in social, political and corporate jousts the best armed rider is the one who is best informed.

The Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975 was a watershed in guaranteeing the rights of the disabled to educational opportunities. As a result, vocational schools, two and four-year colleges and universities are currently seeing a first wave of disabled students who aspire to advanced degrees. California has identified SLD to be the fastest growing category of students with disabilities on state university campuses; the numbers of SLD increased by 500 percent between 1980 and 1985. These students continue to comprise the largest category with exceptional

needs currently enrolled in California public schools.⁸ The latest figures indicate that one percent of college freshman nationwide claim a learning disability.⁹ "Of course, learning disabled students represent but one group of disabled students, but their increased numbers on . . . campuses suggest that their needs should be addressed more systematically."¹⁰ The provision of support services for all disabled groups has not matched architectural/physical alterations seen across the country. The fact that only one doctoral program exists to prepare professionals for dealing with the learning disabled in higher education indicates the need for a more serious appraisal of support services programs. It is precisely here that libraries may engage in cooperative assistance with other campus organizations to assist in the academic growth of SLD.

Authorities have suggested that SLD visit the library at candidate institutions to check out its facilities and services.¹¹ Besides raising the overall quality of its services, library programs designed to enhance SLD performance can also become a positive factor in recruiting. In addition, workshops and special publications for SLD increase library visibility on campus and fortify the library's chances for grants and special funds.

How are librarians prepared to be both sensitive to disabled issues and aggressive in meeting them? Wright investigated the response of library educators and administrators in North Carolina.¹² They favor integrating information about the disabled into the regular library science curriculum, rather than offering special courses or career specializations. Foundations courses, for example, could cover aspects of the disabled population in the context of client groups, legal requirements and budgeting decisions.

Wright identified a renewed emphasis on human relations/communication skills, and a trend toward developing

microcomputer-based library services as future influences on instruction concerning the disabled. Emerging librarians must have communication or "people" skills to overcome prejudices, antipathies and stereotypes which inhibit fruitful interactions with individuals who are different from themselves. Also, librarians must be conscious of inappropriate code switching behaviors with the disabled, much as with ESL students.¹³ Speaking louder and operatic gesturing, for example, are typical pitfalls of discourse with persons of unfamiliar cultural backgrounds or cognitive states. Actively recruiting the disabled for the profession would accelerate librarians' education vis-a-vis disabled clients and would invite greater minority representation in the library community.

Technology has provided the means to offer information in a bewildering array of formats including voice and braille input and output. While non-traditional formats and remote delivery of information open fresh vistas for the disabled, computers must not become obstacles in themselves. Microcomputers can be programmed or physically adapted, for example, with large print screens and single keystroke functions. Again, campuses with disabled students services programs can offer advice to that institution's library automation planners.

This introduction has offered only a portion of the activity surrounding the disabled and academic libraries. It is hoped that in the coming years the literature of both librarians and the disabilities specialists will display some cross-pollination. A few of the major books written for learning disabled students in the college and university environment do not list libraries in their index.^{14,15} Although this may be the failing of the indexer, or a result of the texts' focus or objective, one could surmise the library's omission is due to the profession's passivity. Just as students with

learning disabilities must make their "invisible" disabilities apparent to professors, so too librarians must make clear their intentions to be active participants in the life of the communities they serve.

A Workshop for Students With Learning Disabilities

The workshop was a cooperative venture between Clark Library and the Disabled Student Services Program (DSSP), San Jose State University. Donna Pontau, Library liaison to the DSSP and library science practicum student Greg Carlson teamed with learning disabilities specialist Judy Brown to develop the program over a five-month period. The workshop contributors believed that CD-ROM databases could simplify research paper and homework assignments for SLD. Because these students frequently manifest visual-perceptual, sequencing and time management problems the team felt the target group would benefit from a specialized workshop. In addition to helping students use CD-ROM systems and understand bibliographic information, the workshop would market the Library as a friendly and helpful institution where the student's intellectual growth is the major concern. The objectives of the workshop circumferenced the following:

Library Team

- *Establish rapport with SJSU students with learning disabilities**
- *Learn more about various learning disabilities**
- *Increase library use by SLD**
- *Discover barriers/insights to CD-ROM hardware/software modifications**

Students

- *Decrease anxiety levels of learning disabled students about library research and raise their level of self-esteem/sense of competence
- *Improve computer literacy for SJSU learning disabled students

Preparations began with team meetings once a week to discuss what learning disabilities were; what behaviors were typical of SLD; what could be reasonably accomplished with the target group. First, the authors became aware of the range of services DSSP made available to SLD which included diagnostic testing and counseling services. It was learned that SLD reacted in different ways to media since, depending on their disabilities, they had developed variant learning styles. Because some students would be most comfortable with print, others with sound, the authors decided on a multimedia presentation strategy: handouts, overhead projector/transparencies, poster boards and student hands-on practice on the CD-ROM system. This strategy also had the advantage of holding the audience's attention.

Because sequencing is a concern in instructing SLD, the authors blocked the presentation into constituent parts. The workshop model incorporated the steps necessary to formulate, implement, view and print-out search results on the ERIC CD-ROM index from SilverPlatter. The authors assigned to each section of the presentation a shape (e.g., square or circle) which was displayed on appropriate handout sheets and on transparencies. The authors would display one "progress report" transparency with the whole sequence at the transitions between sections. Another significant aspect of the workshop design was the use of color coded handouts and transparencies. The colors and shapes in the visual aids were chosen for

ease of recognition and readability rather than for any intrinsic meaning. They included: square/beige for *planning* ; triangle/pink for *entering* ; circle/blue for *viewing* ; diamond/yellow for *printing* . In addition, introductory pages described the physical components of a CD-ROM station and the nature of an information need--designated by a question mark on green paper. A concluding section described how to interpret bibliographic information, and how to find primary sources such as articles and microfiche in the Library.

Color coding became a sidebar story to the workshop. A learning disabilities researcher at CSU Long Beach, Helen Irlen, had discovered a few years ago what she termed *scotopic sensitivity syndrome* . Apparently, many persons with learning disabilities exhibit a relatively high incidence of a perceptual disorder that makes reading high contrast print materials (e.g., black on white) difficult. The solution to the problem meant testing the syndrome sufferer for colors which were most hospitable to the eyes, then designing colored lenses or transparent colored overlays for reading. Despite the absence of authoritative research on the syndrome, the authors worked under the assumption that at least some of the target group would benefit from using light colored paper (salmon, buff, light grey, etc.) and transparencies.

The authors used as basic a language as possible for visual aids. Gross sequencing difficulties are often paralleled by problems on the sentence or word level. Only content bearing words were retained and most explanations were kept to simple sentences and phrases. Where possible the authors reused symbols or emblems instead of words to simplify recognition. This iconography was especially evident on workshop invitations. The invitations were sent on pumpkin-colored paper which

was the color used for mailings to SLD by Disabled Student Services. The authors felt this detail helped lend the workshop credibility and approval in the eyes of the target group. All workshop materials were laser printed, produced in the Helvetica font with 18 point type, and contained ample "white space".

Because this was a workshop conceived by novices with no familiarity with like experiments, uncertainties about appropriate content were an issue. One perplexing area was whether to introduce the Thesaurus of ERIC Descriptors as a search tool. In the end, the authors decided not to mention the thesaurus unless asked about it. Students who showed an interest during the scheduled workshop could be given individualized instruction in thesaurus function and use during several planned follow-up sessions.

Another area of uncertainty was "How many students will attend the workshop?" Because SLD in general have poor class attendance and often are confused by dates and times, the team anticipated a small turnout. To improve "precision and recall" individuals were phoned at home after the team received student responses to attend one of the two presentations. The attrition rate was high; eight students actually attended the workshops. The authors felt in retrospect that it may have been wise to telephone again on the morning of the presentations each student registered for that session. It is hoped that future workshops will have the advantage of favorable reviews spread from the eight students attending to their peers.

The two attached handouts at the end of this manuscript provide a glimpse of workshop organization and content. The first is a flier announcing the workshop and describing its intent. Technical terms such as "CD-ROM", or even "computer", were avoided in order to reach the computer-phobic. The second is the handout packet given to each SLD for

use during the verbal and overhead portions of the presentations. It was designed also to function as a flip-chart for the students on later CD-ROM forays. At the end of the packet is an evaluation sheet. The authors were interested in the perceptions of SLD with regards to the workshop, their willingness to attend similar workshops in the future, and their library use habits in general. Information was also desired about possible improvements in workshop design and implementation.

The authors had planned to combine the CD-ROM instruction session with one introducing new apparatus for disabled students on a CD-ROM workstation--VISTA, a text enlarger and VERT, a voice synthesizer. Because of technical difficulties (faulty computer boards), however, the second half of the workshop scheme was scrubbed. VISTA and VERT adaptations are available from Telesensory Systems, Inc., Mountain View, California. It is hoped that similar equipment will enhance access to the online public access catalog currently under development at the San Jose State University Library.

Conclusion: Where Do We Go From Here?

The response to the workshop has been positive by any standard or measure. Students were enthusiastic participants and showed a desire to return to the library for future workshops. Two students were observed using the CD-ROM systems in the Library shortly after the presentations. The students on both days were impressed by what they considered to be a special effort by the team to make the experience easy to follow and instructive. One may rightly ask, "Even so, was the money and professional time spent on helping eight students worth it all." The answer seems to depend on whether one is willing to see beyond the horizon.

The workshop achieved its objective of establishing better contact with the target group and the learning disabilities support services staff. Further, the workshop's success assures a healthy climate for future cooperative programs between the Library and DSSP. Original research into SLD study habits, or their reaction to various types of presentations are possible spin-offs of this initial effort. The workshops can serve as models for bibliographic instruction and CD-ROM presentations to other groups who require simple, systematic entry into the technology. As other campuses turn their sights to growing enrollments of SLD, this workshop can become a component of inservice programming. Positive attitudes, values and pedagogical strategies on the part of faculty, including librarians, encourages students to discuss their disabilities openly: "Our LD students have reported more acceptance and less suspicion when they identify themselves to faculty."¹⁶ The knowledge gained by one reference librarian about the needs of the disabled can become the foundation of a knowledgeable staff. And finally, if one subscribes to the big picture, small events such as this one can change a person's life significantly. For these reasons, the authors conclude it was a worthwhile investment of energy.

Ideas for adding to or building upon the workshop have surfaced since its completion. It has been suggested that SLD students who participate in future workshops be given certificates acknowledging their completion of specialized instruction. The certificates would also constitute automatic membership in an ongoing club or association of SLD interested in the Library. The authors may restructure their data gathering instrument as students returned very few comments. Because most students were eager to verbalize their reactions rather than write them, a combination of avenues for expression may be necessary. Video taping workshop sessions

with the consent of students will be tried in the future.

As recognition builds for SLD on college campuses so too will the need for support networks and specialized learning forums. Academic librarians should embrace this challenge; work with other segments of the community, share resources, and apply library expertise to managing materials that are accessible to all users. Academic library administrations should provide leadership and vision with explicit policy and planning statements for staff awareness and continuity of service to the disabled.²

Just as the space program improved the quality of life via terrestrial applications of its discoveries, academic libraries enrich society by empowering individuals and groups of sundry needs, talents and backgrounds. Students with learning disabilities and all collegiate minorities will welcome an academic library's diversity and pluralism as well.

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¹¹Michael, Robert J. "Library services for LD college students," Academic Therapy, Vol. 25, no. 5, (May 1988), p. 520-522.

¹²Wright, Kieth C. "Educating librarians about service to special groups: The emergence of disabled persons into the mainstream," North Carolina Libraries, Vol. 45, no. 2 (Summer 1987), p. 79-82.

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Simplify Your Homework Assignments!

**SJSU Library Workshop
April 11 and 15 1989**

**Donna Pontau
Greg Carlson**

CDROM

(Compact Disc Read Only Memory)

Parts:

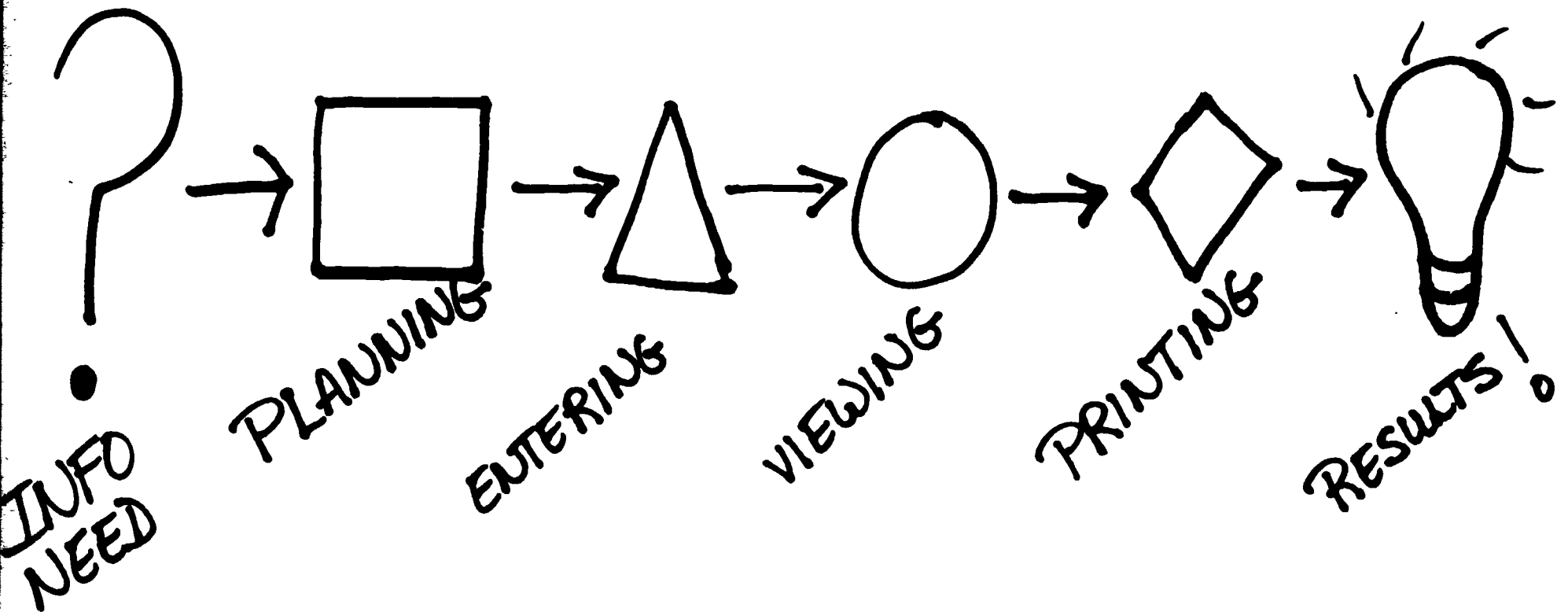
**computer
keyboard
screen
compact disc player
printer**

**CDROM system is computerized version of
print magazine indexes like Readers' Guide.**

**ERIC is the name of the education
index/database on CDROM.**

Other systems are available.

SEQUENCE





Information Need

What is the assignment?

What is your "thesis statement"?

How much information do you need to complete it?

What types of sources may you use?

What is the major point you'd like to discuss or research?



Planning the Search

Divide your topic into its parts or sets.

Ex. test anxiety mathematics

Think of words which denote or define the topic.

Ex. mathematics algebra calculus

Use Boolean AND OR to connect the words.

OR used to connect synonyms

AND used to combine the sets



Entering the Search

FIND mode



key

Type in your keywords at the "FIND" prompt.

Use only one or two terms per "FIND" line.

Place a hyphen between multiword or common phrases. Ex. test-anxiety college-students

Always hit ENTER key to communicate with the computer.

Check for typographical errors if the computer reports zero items.

Continue to enter terms in the sequence you designed.



ERIC (1/83 - 12/88)

[illegible]

: TITLE SCREEN

1 of 1

The ERIC Database
Jan., 1983 - December, 1988

The ERIC (Educational Resources Information Center) database consists of the Resources in Education (RIE) file of document citations and the Current Index to Journals in Education (CIJE) file of journal article citations from over 750 professional journals. Sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education, ERIC is a network of 16 Clearinghouses, each specializing in a separate subject area.

```

~ To use the TUTORIAL:  press Ctrl T
~ To search the ERIC database:  type your search request,
                                then press RETURN
~ To learn about the system or one of its functions:  press F1 (HELP)
~ To learn about the ERIC database:  press F3 (GUIDE)

```

[illegible]

FIND:

Type a search request, then press RETURN; or press F1 for HELP.

If the menu does not appear on the screen when you sit down to use the CDROM system, hit F7.



FIND



Problem

Solution

Zero results

Check typing

Too many records

Use Boolean AND

**Taking too long
to process**

**Use terms not
phrases**



Viewing Search Results

SHOW mode

F4 key

Record -- each individual citation in the database.

Field -- the individual parts of the record.
Ex. author, title, journal name, abstract

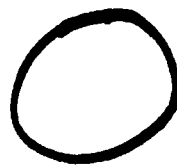
Specify which portion - "FIELDS" - of the records you want to view.

Specify which citations - "RECORDS" - you want to view.

Use the TAB key to move the cursor from the FIELDS prompt to the RECORDS prompt.

Hit the ENTER key to communicate with the computer.

SHOW will not work if the last set number has zero records.



SHOW **F4**

Problem

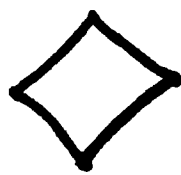
Solution

**Display does not
appear**

Hit ENTER key

**Want to print
records**

**Use PRINT mode
F6**



Printing the Search Results

PRINT mode

F6 key

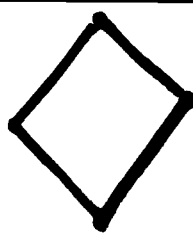
Specify which portion - "FIELDS" of the records you want printed.

Specify which citations - "RECORDS" - you want printed.

Use the TAB key to move the cursor.

Hit the ENTER key to communicate with the computer.

Hit the F2 key to return to FIND mode; then hit the PRINT SCREEN key. Your search strategy will be printed so you will know what words and sequence generated the citations you printed.



SilverPlatter v1.4

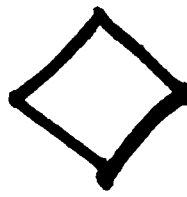
ERIC (1/83 - 12/88)

3 of 6

AN: EJ289356
CHN: C6525185
AU: Dew,-Kathleen-Michie-Harriss; And-Others
TI: Mathematics Anxiety: Some Basic Issues.
PY: 1983
JN: Journal-of-Counseling-Psychology; v30 n3 p443-46 Jul 1983
AV: UMI
DT: Reports - Research (143)
LA: English
DE: College-Students; Higher-Education; Screening-Tests; Test-Reliability
DE: *Mathematics-Anxiety; *Sex-Differences; *Test-Anxiety
IS: CIJMAR84
AB: Investigated the relationship of math anxiety to test anxiety in 769 college students. Results indicated nonequivalent internal consistency and test-retest reliability for three math anxiety measures tested and small but significant sex differences in anxiety. Math anxiety measures were more closely related to each other than to test anxiety. (WAS)
CH: CG
FI: EJ
DTN: 143

4 of 6

AN: ED291039
CHN: C6020571
AU: Grina,-Michaela-Erin
TI: A Descriptive Study of Community College Students Coping with Examination Stress.
PY: 1987
NT: 16 p.; Excerpt from Ph.D. Dissertation, Oregon State University.
PR: EDRS Price - MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DT: Reports - Research (143); Dissertations /Theses - Doctoral Dissertations (041)
CP: U.S.; Oregon
LA: English
PG: 16
DE: Counseling-Services; Two-Year-Colleges
DE: *Cognitive-Style; *Community-Colleges; *Coping-; *Stress-Variables; *Test-Anxiety; *Two-Year-College-Students
IS: RIEJUL88
AB: In previous research students' reactions to examinations from a cognitive-process perspective have been based on a singular study of university college students. The purpose of this study was to describe and predict students' reactions to a community college mid-term examination, based on a cognitively-oriented, process centered theory of stress and coping. Students' reactions were expected to produce shifting patterns of their thinking, feeling, and coping through three stages of the examination: anticipation stage before the examination (Time I); the day of the examination (Time II); and the outcome stage when grades were announced (Time III). Subjects consisted of freshman and sophomore community college student volunteers (N=117) enrolled in a mathematics course. Personality traits, emotions, and coping were assessed. Findings of the study in regard to stress and coping being defined as a process were inconclusive. In contrast to an earlier study, stress emotions were not shown to be a process. The results for considering coping as a process were also inconclusive, although significant changes in coping were observed. Individual differences in emotional reactions



PRINT **F6**

Problem

Solution

**Printer does not
start**

**Hit ENTER key
Check paper**

**Runs out of paper
Type is too light or
blurry**

**Ask librarian or
search assistant
for new
supplies**

Won't stop printing

**Hit Control/
Break(Pause)
keys at the
same time**

Locating items in the Library

Journal Articles

- 1. Determine the name of the journal from the printout. (JN line)**
- 2. Check the Periodicals List to see if the Library owns the journal in paper, microfilm or both.**
- 3. If paper copies are held, write down the call number in the left column.**
- 4. Go to the 3rd floor to find the desired item in paper format.**
- 5. If microfilm copies are kept, go to the 2nd floor, Media Services Department.**
- 6. If the Library does not own the journal, go to Room 106 - Interlibrary Loan.**

Microfiche

If a record's top AN line has an "ED" number in it, the item is available on microfiche. Go to the file cabinets in Media Services, 2nd floor, to retrieve it.

Never hesitate to ask for assistance!

Everyone has questions!

Information

Human help is available when using the CDROM computers.

Ask a reference librarian or CDROM student assistant if you would like to learn other CDROM system features.

Announcements will be made when the large-print and the voice capabilities on the ERIC CDROM system are working.

FOLLOW-UP SCHEDULE

Wed., 12 April	3 - 4 pm	Donna
Thurs., 13 April	3 - 4 pm	Donna
Friday, 14 April	1 - 3 pm	Greg
Monday, 17 April	3 - 4:30 pm	Donna
Tues., 18 April	10 am - noon	Greg
Wed., 19 April	10:30 am - noon	Donna
Thurs., 20 April	1 - 3 pm	Donna
Friday, 21 April	1 - 3 pm	Greg

After the 21st, individualized practice sessions are available by appointment.

CD-ROM Evaluation Form

To help us improve our presentation to future groups, please answer the following questions. Write as much as you like for questions three through seven. We appreciate your comments.

1. How often do you use the library, other than to work in the high-tech center? Please circle one answer.
 - a) more than five times a week
 - b) one to five times a week
 - c) once every two weeks
 - d) less than once every two weeks

2. How often do you use the library's high-tech center? Please circle one answer.
 - a) more than five times a week
 - b) one to five times a week
 - c) once every two weeks
 - d) less than once every two weeks

3. Would you consider attending other library-related workshops in the future? If so, what kinds of workshops would most interest or help you?

- 4. Was the CD-ROM presentation clear? Was it too hurried or too slow? What would you recommend to improve our presentation?**

- 5. Do you think you will use the Library's CD-ROM system in the future?**

- 6. Is information from the CD-ROM system valuable for completing your assignments? If so, what courses give these assignments?**

- 7. What aspect of our presentation surprised you?**

Thank you for completing this form. We hope to see you at our follow-up sessions!